

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-14

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 RSC-01 FEA-02 AEC-11 EB-11 TRSE-00

NSF-04 PM-07 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03

SAM-01 SS-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /170 W

----- 005676

R 121848Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7938

INFO USDOC WASHDC

USAEC WASHDC

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS LONDON 01953

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, TECH, BMEP, UK

SUBJECT: CANADIAN INTEREST IN UK REACTOR MARKET
HEIGHTENS

REF: LONDON 1068; 1069 NOTAL

1. ALTHOUGH MARKED BY RELATIVELY LITTLE PUBLICITY, THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 4-8 SAW AN EXPRESSION OF INTENSE INTEREST ON THE PART OF CANADA IN BREAKING INTO THE U.K. NUCLEAR REACTOR MARKET. A HIGH-LEVEL TEAM HEADED BY CANADIAN MINISTER FOR ENERGY DONALD MACDONALD SPENT THAT TIME DISCUSSING THE PROSPECTS FOR CANADIAN-UK NUCLEAR PARTNERSHIP IN HEAVY WATER REACTOR SYSTEMS. MINISTER MACDONALD WAS QUOTED IN THE PRESS AT THE END OF LAST WEEK AS SAYING THAT THERE WAS A REAL POSSIBILITY OF BRITAIN CHOOSING BETWEEN U.S. LIGHT WATER AND ANGLO-CANADIAN HEAVY WATER REACTORS. HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER HIS CURRENT TRIP A SUCCESS IF THE U.K. ADOPTED THE STEAM GENERATING HEAVY WATER REACTOR (THAT IS, A SYSTEM
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NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE CANADIAN CANDU). MACDONALD

ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD NOT GOTTEN VERY FAR WITH ARTHUR HAWKINS, CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL ELECTRICITY GENERATING BOARD, WHO HAS ADVOCATED THE PURCHASE OF U.S. LWR'S BY THE CEGB.

2. MINISTER MACDONALD ALSO ANNOUNCED THE VISIT TO CANADA BEGINNING FEBRUARY 10 OF HMG CHIEF SCIENTIST SIR ALAN COTTRELL AND TWO MEMBERS OF THE NUCLEAR POWER ADVISORY BOARD, R.V. MOORE AND J.S.R. MORRIS. THE GROUP REPORTEDLY WAS DUE TO VISIT THE PICKERING CANDU STATION NEAR TORONTO AND A CANDU CONSTRUCTION SITE AT BRUCE, ONTARIO. THE CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION SCIENCE COUNSELOR HERE HAS CONFIRMED TO US THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIP AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE PARTY. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE BRIEF VISIT, WHILE TIMELY, IS THE RESULT OF AN INVITATION EXTENDED TO COTTRELL BY ATOMIC ENERGY OF CANADA A YEAR AGO. THE U.K. TEAM IS EXPECTED BACK IN LONDON ON FEBRUARY 13.

4. ADDRESSEES (EXCEPT OTTAWA) WILL RECALL THAT COTTRELL (A LEADING METALLURGIST) RECENTLY EXPRESSED SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE INTEGRITY OF PRESSURE VESSELS IN U.S. LWR'S (REFTELS), A POTENTIAL PROBLEM WHICH DOES NOT ARISE IN THE CANDU OR BRITISH SGHWR SYSTEMS. THE NUCLEAR POWER ADVISORY BOARD HAS YET TO MAKE ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ON REACTOR TYPES TO HMG, AND OBVIOUSLY A FINAL DECISION WILL REMAIN IN ABEYANCE PENDING THE RESULTS OF THE GENERAL ELECTION. IT SEEMS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE CASTING ABOUT FOR A HEAVY WATER ALTERNATIVE, POSSIBLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH CANDU EXPERTISE, TO THE IMPORT OF U.S. LWR NUCLEAR REACTOR TECHNOLOGY.

4. FOR EMBASSY OTTAWA: WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION ON COTTRELL'S VISIT. ANNENBERG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, NUCLEAR REACTORS, NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON01953
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740239/aaaabkqm.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SCI
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LONDON 1068; 1069 NOTAL
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 MAR 2002 by elbezefj>; APPROVED <31 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CANADIAN INTEREST IN UK REACTOR MARKET HEIGHTENS
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, BEXP, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005